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Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 NEA-14 ISO-00 SAM-01 PM-07 NSC-07 SP-03

SS-20 RSC-01 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PRS-01

L-03 IO-14 DRC-01 SR-02 /118 W
---------- 053214
O R 091030Z JUL 74
FM AMEMBASSY RABAT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2479
INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USINT ALGIERS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 RABAT 3156

MADRID FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR MO SP SS
SUBJECT: SPANISH SAHARA: ANALYSIS OF MOROCCAN POSITION

1. SUMMARY: KING'S LETTER TO FRANCO AND JULY 8 SPEECH, AND DIPLOMATIC ACTIVITIES OF PRIME AND ACTING FOREIGN MINISTERS, ARE MAJOR ESCALATION OF MOROCCO'S EFFORT TO RECOVER SAHARA. RECENT EVENTS IN PORTUGAL SEEM HAVE CONVINCED KING THAT SPAIN WOULD BE LEAVING AFRICA ANYWAY AND TIME TO MOVE WAS NOW. KING'S OBJECTIVES ARE: 1) TO FORCE SPAIN TO ABANDON STALLING TACTICS: 2) TO CONVINCE SPANISH THAT THEY SHOULD NEGOTIATE DIRECTLY WITH MOROCCANS WITH VIEW TO RETURNING TERRITORY TO MOROCCO AND NOT LEAVE ISSUE TO UN; 3) TO GAIN ARAB SUPPORT FOR MOROCCAN POSITION AT UPCOMING SUMMIT; AND 4) TO STRENGTHEN KING'S POSITION INTERNALLY. WE CONSIDER IT REAL POSSIBILITY THAT THERE WILL BE CLASHES WITH SPANISH SECURITY FORCES IN SAHARA. MOROCCAN POSITION IS DIFFICULT IN VIEW ALGERIAN ATTITUDE.
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NEVERTHELESS, GOM HAS CONVINCED MADRID IT MEANS BUSINESS,

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HAS ATTEMPTED AT SAME TIME TO SHOW THAT READY TO NEGOTIATE IN GOOD FAITH, HAS WORKED HARD TO PREPARE ARAB LEADERS TO SUPPORT ITS POSITION, AND HAS PROBABLY STRENGTHENED KING'S POSITION INTERNALLY.

2. IN TERMS US INTEREST, MOROCCAN PROBABLY TO BE PREFERRED TO ALGERIANS OR MAURITANIANS AS MASTERS OF SAHARA. NEVERTHELESS, WE SHOULD NOT BECOME INVOLVED IN DISPUTE AND SHOULD AVOID GIVING IMPRESSION THAT WE ARE WORKING AGAINST INTEREST OF ANY OF THREE PARTIES INVOLVED. END SUMMARY.

3. PAST 72 HOURS HAVE WITNESSED THREE EVENTS WHICH REPRESENT MAJOR ESCALATION IN MOROCCAN CAMPAIGN FOR RECOVERY OF SPANISH SAHARA. THESE ARE KING HASSAN'S LETTER TO GENERAL FRANCO (RABAT 3128), WELL-PUBLICIZED CONVOKING OF AMBASSADORS BY PRIME MINISTER AND ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER (RABAT 3144), AND KING'S STRONGLY WORDED SPEECH OF JULY 8 (BEING REPORTED SEPTEL). ALTHOUGH APPARENTLY A RESPONSE TO GOM'S LEARNING OF SPANISH INTENTION TO GRANT MEASURE OF AUTONOMY TO REGION, THESE EVENTS FIT NICELY INTO CAMPAIGN WHICH HAS BEEN FOUGTH ON PROPAGANDA FRONT FOR PAST THREE MONTHS AND WHICH IS PROBABLY AIMED AT ARAB SUMMIT SCHEDULED BEGIN HERE SEPTEMBER 3.

4. MOROCCO HAS NEVER RELINQUISHED ITS CLAIMS TO THE SPANISH SAHARA BUT ADROIT SPANISH DIPLOMACY AND STALLING HAVE HELPED TO KEEP KETTLE SIMMERING RATHER THAN BOILING. RECENT EVENTS IN PORTUGAL, HOWEVER, SEEM TO HAVE CONVINCED KING THAT PORTUGAL WILL LEAVE AFRICA SOON AND THAT THEREAFTER SPAIN WILL HAVE LITTLE TASTE FOR REMAINING LAST HIGH-PROFILE "COLONIALIST" AND HENCE UNIVERSAL SHIPPING BOY. TO HIM, THEREFORE, QUESTION IS NOT WHETHER SPAIN WILL LEAVE SAHARA BUT HOW.

5. MOROCCAN OBJECTIVES: KING HAS ESSENTIALLY FOUR OBJECTIVES IN HEATING UP SAHARA ISSUE: 1) TO FORCE SPAIN TO ABANDON ITS STALLING TACTICS ON SAHARA AND TAKE ACTION TO SETTLE REGION'S FUTURE: 2) TO CONVINCE SPANISH THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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IT IS IN THEIR BEST INTEREST TO NEGOTIATE, PREFERABLY BILATERALLY WITH MROCCANS, A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM WHICH MEETS MOROCCO'S INTEREST RATHER THAN SIMPLY TO TURN THE MATTER OVER TO THE UN; 3) TO GAIN ARAB SUPPORT FOR MOROCCAN POSITION; AND 4) TO STRENGTHEN HIS POSITION, PARTICULARLY WITH ARMY, BUT ALSO WITH PARTIES AND GENERAL PUBLIC, BY SHOWING HIMSELF TRULY MILITAN ON SAHARA. BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS WITH SPANISH OBVIOUSLY OF UTMOST

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IMPORTANCE TO MOROCCANS. BOTH KING AND PRIME MINISTER
MADE STRONG POINT THAT THIS IS BEST WAY OUT OF PROBLEM
AND HAVE STRESSED CONTINUING MOROCCAN WILLINGNESS TO BE
ACCOMMODATING WITH RESPECT TO SPANISH SECURITY AND ECONOMIC
INTERESTS IN REGION.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 RABAT 3156

MADRID FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

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6. NEXT MOVE: UNLESS MOROCCANS BELIEVE THEMSELVES TO
BE MAKING SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS TOWARDS GETTING NEGOTIATIONS
STARTED WITH SPAIN, MANY HERE BELIEVE SOME MORE CONCRETE
MOROCCAN ACTION LIKELY BEFORE SUMMIT. DIRECT MILITARY
ACTION OUT OF QUESTION GIVEN OVERWHELMING SPANISH SUPERIORITY
IN THIS FIELD. HOWEVER, IT WOULD BE RELATIVELY EASY FOR
GOM TO SEND A FEW OF LARGE NUMBER OF SAHARAN REFUGEES
LIVING IN MOROCCO BACK INTO SAHRA TO ENGAGE IN GUERRILLA
ACTIVITY AGAINST SPANISH FORCES OR TO COMMIT SABOTAGE

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ACTS. ALMOST INEVITABLE RESULT OF SUCH MOVE WOULD BE
"MARTYRS" TO CAUSE OF BRINING SAHARA BACK TO MOTHERLAND.
AT SUMMIT, GOM WOULD CITE THESE MEN, AND THOSE WHO DIED
IN MIDDLE EAST, AS EVIDENCE OF MOROCCAN COMMITMENT TO
CAUSE OF ARAB LIBERATION AND WOULD SEEK TO USE THEM AS
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BARGAINING COUNTERS IN EFFORT TO GET ARAB LEADERS TO
SUPPORT MOROCCAN IRRIDENTISM IN SAHARA. AT THIS POINT,
WE CONSIDER SOME SORT OF GOM-INSPIRED GUERRILLA ACTIVITY
IN SAHARA A REAL POSSIBILITY.

7. DIFFICULTY OF MOROCCAN POSITION: DIPLOMATIC GAME
WHICH KING PLAYING IS CLEARLY A DIFFICULT ONE. AS HIS
CRITICS POINT OUT, HE IS AT DISADVANTAGE BECAUSE OF
MOROCCAN ACCEPTANCE OF PRINCIPLE OF SELF-DETERMINATION
AND VALIDITY OF ALGERIAN STATUS AS "INTERESTED PARTY."
AS SPANISH NOTE (RABAT 3149), GREAT DANGER TO MOROCCAN
POSITION IS THAT GOS WILL SIMPLY CALL UPON UN TO SETTLE
MATTER, PROBABLY BY PLEBISCITE. IN THIS EVENT, GOM
WILL BE FORCED TO INSIST ON RETURN OF REFUGEES IF VOTING
IS TO GO ITS WAY AND WILL HAVE GREAT TROUBLE IN GAINING
SUPPORT FOR THIS VIEW. ALGERIANS ARE MAIN VILLAIN IN
PIECE AS FAR AS MOROCCANS ARE CONCERNED. THEY WILL IN
ALL PROBABLITY CONTINUE TO OPPOSE MOROCCAN DESIGNS ON
SAHARA, AND ARAB LEADERS, LIKE MANY IN SPAIN, WILL BE
MOST RECLUCTANT TO GO AGAINST THEIR WISHES.

8. IN FINAL ANALYSIS, HOWEVER, MOROCCANS
ARE PROBABLY PLAYING GAME ABOUT ONLY WAY POSSIBLE, GIVEN
SPANISH PREFERENCE FOR STATUS QUO AND ALGERIAN OPPOSITION
TO MOROCCAN DESIGNS. GOM HAS AT LEAST SUCCEEDED IN
CONVINCING MADRID THAT IT MEANS BUSINESS, AND AT SAME TIME
HAS INDICATED THAT IT IS READY TO NEGOTIATE IN REASONABLE
WAY. WE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF, AFTER SMOKE OF KING'S
PRONOUNCEMENTS HAS CLEARED AWAY, GOM FOLLOWED UP WITH
MORE PRIVATE OVERTURES TO SPANISH. AT SAME TIME, MOROCCANS
HAVE DONE ABOUT ALL THEY COULD IN PROPAGANDA DOMAIN TO
PREPARE ARAB LEADERS TO ACCEPT REASONABLENESS OF MOROCCAN
POSITION AT SUMMIT IN SEPTEMBER. PROPAGANDA HAS DOUBTLESS
BEEN SUPPLEMENTED BY PRIVATE CONTACTS.

9. U.S. INTERESTS: CONSIDERING GOOD STATE US/MOROCCAN
RELATIONS, MOROCCANS ARE PROBABLY TO BE PREFERRED TO ALGERIANS
OR MAURITANIANS AS MASTERS OF SAHARA. NEVERTHELESS,
WE SHOULD NOT REPEAT NOT BECOME INVOLVED IN THIS DISPUTE.
OUR MAJOR CONCERN IS NOT TO MAKE IT APPEAR TO SPAIN,
MOROCCO OR ALGERIA THAT WE ARE WORKING AGAINST THEIR INTEREST.
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PRIME MINISTER'S REQUEST THAT WE "USE OUR INFLUENCE"
WITH SPAIN (ALSO REPEATED TO USSR, FRENCH, BRITISH AND PRC
REPRESENTATIVES) TO BRING ABOUT RESOLUTION OF ISSUE
FAVORABLE TO MOROCCANS CLEARLY FOR THE RECORD, AND WE
SHOULD PLAN TO TREAT IT EXACTLY THAT WAY.

10. WE WOULD BE INTERESTED TO LEARN HOW EMBASSIES MADRID
AND NOUAKCHOTT, AND USINT ALGIERS, VIEW PROBLEM.
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